

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: WEEKLY ACTIVITIES REPORT: JAN16-20

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A. FOLLOW-UP OF LAST WEEK'S REPORT.

1. OMB MEMORANDUM ON THE CANAL COMMISSION. ALL CONCERNED AGENCIES HAVE PROVIDED OMB WITH THEIR INPUT. THE DEPARTMENT WILL RECEIVE A COPY FOR COMMENT OF OMB'S DRAFT DECISION MEMO TO THE PRESIDENT DURING THE WEEK OF JAN 23.
2. REPLY TO FAA. DEPARTMENT REPLY TO FAA IS UNDER PREPARATION.
3. WHITMAN REPORT. WE SHOULD HAVE A RESPONSE TO THE REPORT COMPLETED BY 1/27.
4. HUMAN RIGHTS. PER STATE 018330, THE UNCLASSIFIED REPORT PROPOSED FOR SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS WILL BE CABLED TO THE EMBASSY SHORTLY.

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B. NEW ACTIVITIES.

1. STATE OF THE UNION. PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARKS ON PANAMA DURING HIS STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS GOT THE LONGEST OVATION, AT THE END OF WHICH THE PRESIDENT SAID, "THAT APPLAUSE IS VERY WELCOME." TEXT FOLLOWS: BEGIN

QUOTE. FINALLY THE WORLD IS WATCHING TO SEE HOW WE ACT ON ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT ITEMS OF BUSINESS: APPROVAL OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES. THE TREATIES NOW BEFORE THE SENATE ARE THE RESULT OF THE WORK OF FOUR ADMINISTRATIONS--TWO DEMOCRATIC AND TWO REPUBLICAN. THEY GUARANTEE THAT THE CANAL WILL BE OPEN ALWAYS FOR UNRESTRICTED USE BY THE SHIPS OF THE WORLD. OUR SHIPS HAVE THE RIGHT TO GO TO THE HEAD OF THE LINE FOR PRIORITY OF PASSAGE IN TIMES OF NEED OR EMERGENCY. WE RETAIN THE RIGHT TO DEFEND THE CANAL WITH OUR OWN MILITARY FORCES IF NECESSARY TO GUARANTEE ITS OPENNESS AND NEUTRALITY.

THE TREATIES ARE TO THE CLEAR ADVANTAGE OF OURSELVES, THE PANAMANIAN, AND THE OTHER USERS OF THE CANAL. RATIFYING THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES WILL DEMONSTRATE OUR GOOD FAITH TO THE WORLD, DISCOURAGE THE SPREAD OF HOSTILE IDEOLOGIES IN THIS HEMISPHERE, AND DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES. END QUOTE.

2. CONGRESS.

(A) ON JANUARY 17-18 THE HOUSE MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE HELD HEARINGS ON THE QUESTION OF THE DISPOSAL OF U.S. PROPERTY UNDER THE CANAL TREATY. ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES HERB HANSELL AND JOHN HARMON (ASST ATTORNEY GENERAL) MAINTAINED THAT A SELF-EXECUTING TREATY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CAN DISPOSE OF U.S. PROPERTY INDEPENDENTLY AND CONCURRENTLY WITH CONGRESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETATION. ALL OTHER NON-ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES TESTIFIED THAT THE POWER IS GIVEN EXCLUSIVELY TO CONGRESS. CHAIRMAN MURPHY AND SNYDER HAVE INTRODUCED A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A RESERVATION TO THE TREATIES ALLOWING FOR A HOUSE VOTE ON THEM. TWO HUNDRED HOUSE MEMBERS HAVE SIGNED THE RESOLUTION.

(B) THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE CONTINUED HEARINGS ON PANAMA JANUARY 19-20. THE FIRST DAY'S WITNESSES WERE HISTORIANS AND LAWYERS, ALL BUT ONE OF WHOM FAVORED THE TREATIES. BRANDES TESTIFIED ON FRIDAY AND PRESENTED PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF HIS ECONOMIC SENSITIVITY STUDY WHICH SHOWED THAT TOLLS COULD BE RAISED 75-100 PERCENT AND RESULT IN A 40 PERCENT INCREASE IN CANAL REVENUES. OTHER WITNESSES INCLUDED THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS, AIMS, DOT AND ACCLA. SEN. CHURCH REPORTED THAT TORRIJOS HAD ASSURED HIM THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD ACCEPT WHATEVER FORMALIZATION OF THE STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING WAS REQUIRED. SFRC MARKUP BEGINS 2/26.

3. ARTHUR ANDERSON STUDY. THE STUDY OF THE CANAL

COMMISSION'S OPERATING COSTS WAS INITIATED THE WEEK OF JAN 9. WE ANTICIPATE ITS COMPLETION BY JAN 30.

4. BRANDES. A DRAFT REPORT WAS SUBMITTED TO US ON JAN 16. WE WILL PROVIDE OUR COMMENTS SHORTLY. THE FINAL REPORT IS DUE ON FEB 6. WE HAVE POUCHED A COPY OF THE SUMMARY TO THE EMBASSY.

5. PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

(A) DURING THE WEEK OF JAN 16, AMBASSADOR BUNKER SPOKE BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAS (AT THE WHITE HOUSE), THE YOUNG HISPANICS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, THE NATIONAL FOREIGN POLICY CONFERENCE FOR EDITORS AND BROADCASTERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THE PROPELLER CLUB OF THE U.S. DICK WYROUGH ADDRESSED THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE COUNCIL, THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL SEMINAR, THE AMERICAN CONSULTANT ENGINEERS (AT THE WHITE HOUSE) AND THE CENTER OF OCEAN LAW AND POLICY REFORM (IN NASSAU).

(B) SIERRA CLUB. ON JANUARY 15, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SIERRA CLUB VOTED TO ENDORSE THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CLUB ARE MEETING WITH OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS TO SEE IF THEY TOO WILL JOIN IN SUPPORTING THE TREATIES. VANCE

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